

PRESS RELEASE

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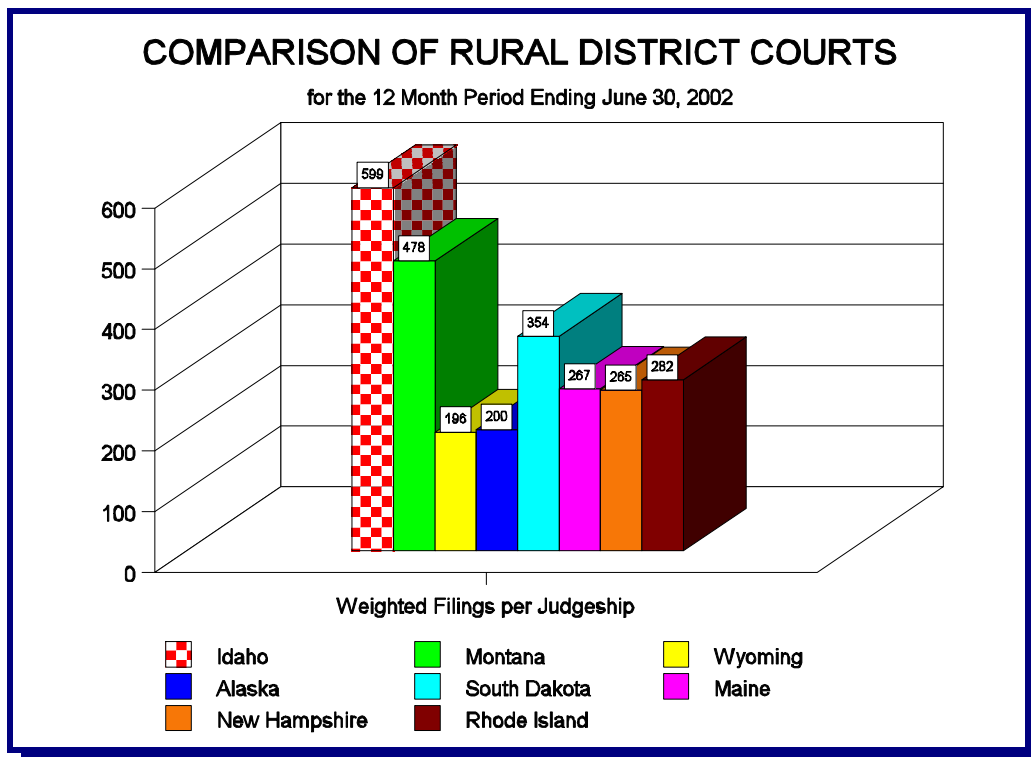
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URGENT NEED FOR ANOTHER FEDERAL JUDGE CONTINUES

Chief District Judge Lynn Winmill recently announced that visiting judges have been assisting the Federal Court in managing the growing criminal caseload in Idaho. Over the past year, close to thirty visiting district and circuit judges from around the 9th Circuit have been authorized to try cases and conduct hearings. In January 2003 alone, seven visiting judges from the Eastern District of Washington, the Western District of Washington, the District of Nevada, and the Central District of California have provided invaluable assistance to the court.

The Federal Court in Idaho urgently needs another district judge. The District of Idaho is one of only three federal courts in the country with just two authorized district judges. By comparison, states with far less population than Idaho's, such as Montana, Wyoming, Alaska, South Dakota, Maine, New Hampshire and Rhode Island have three authorized judgeships. Moreover, the District of Idaho's weighted caseload far exceeds that of the federal courts in those states.



The Judicial Conference of the United States uses weighted caseloads for the purposes of recommending additional judgeships. The current standard is 430 weighted cases and the District of Idaho had 599 weighted cases per judge for the twelve-month period ending June 30, 2002.

Chief Judge Winmill noted, “Even though the District of Idaho substantially exceeds the national standard of 430 weighted filings, this does not tell the entire story. The situation is actually much more dire than the numbers indicate because the weighted caseload standard fails to account for the unique problems posed by our District’s geography. Idaho’s geography requires a tremendous amount of travel by our judges and their staffs. About half of our civil and criminal proceedings are conducted in divisional offices, which require that our judges travel substantial distances from their duty stations”.

The caseload continues to grow. For the twelve month period ending December 31, 2002, there was a 30% increase in the number of criminal defendants in comparison to 2001 figures.

Idaho’s Congressional delegation continues to work hard on obtaining support for a third district judgeship in Idaho. Senator Larry Craig introduced a bill last year authorizing another judgeship. Senator Craig has since been appointed to the Senate Judiciary Committee, which is responsible for considering such appointments